Readout (USA) | Ambassador Hillman Speaks with Rep. Brenda Lawrence (D-Michigan-14)

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On February 15, 2022, Ambassador Hillman spoke with **Rep. Brenda Lawrence (D-MI-14)**, whose district includes the Ambassador Bridge. The Congresswoman requested the call as a follow-up to he discussion with DTROT-HOM/Comartin on Friday. The call was amicable and Lawrence sought to ensure continued collaboration between our countries should similar events occur in the future. Key takeaways:

- **Ambassador Bridge blockade:** Rep. Lawrence shared her frustration over the blockade and the fact that emergency access was initially obstructed. The Congresswoman said that few people know how dependent her district's healthcare system is on nurses who travel back and forth from Canada each day, not to mention our integrated automotive industries and the large volumes of cross-border tourism. She added that while the freedom to peacefully protest is a cornerstone of American democracy, such protests pose a danger to society. HOM shared that, at the onset of the pandemic, she worked closely with the U.S. to ensure the border remained open to essential travel. She noted that Canada is fully cognisant of how important mobility between our countries is. For that reason, explained HOM, PM Trudeau took the action of invoking the Emergencies Act to protect critical infrastructure, including the Ambassador Bridge.

- **Request for better communication:** Lawrence asked that U.S. and Canadian officials consider ways to improve communication in the future. HOM acknowledged the Congresswoman's concerns and agreed with the importance of maintaining open lines of communication across jurisdictions during emergency situations.

- **A shared issue:** Ambassador Hillman emphasized the shared nature of the challenge, referencing American support—both political and financial—for the convoys in Canada. HOM explained that Canadian and U.S. officials are addressing the situation in a coordinated manner, citing the close collaboration between CBSA and CBP. Lawrence acknowledged how American actors have helped fuel the convoys, and expressed concern with copy-cat movements within the U.S. The Congresswoman shared that she has spoken with the White House about measures POTUS can take to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the U.S.

Irrelevant

- **Next steps:** HOM and Rep. Lawrence agreed to remain in contact (at least at a staff level) on the evolving situation at the border. Irrelevant

Irrelevant